

Cross-Party Group on International Development

Tuesday 11th November 2025, 18:00 – 19:40
Committee Room 5 and online

Minute

Present

MSPs

Sarah Boyack MSP – Chair
Liam Kerr MSP (Online)
Maurice Golden MSP (Online)

Invited guests

Simon Anderson, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) – in person
Ben Wilson, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) - online
Julius Ng'oma, Executive Officer for the Chair of the Least Developed Countries Group of climate negotiators COP30 - online
Louise Davies, Scottish Fair Trade - online
Becky Kenton-Lake, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) – in person

Non-MSP Group Members

In person:

Frances Guy (SIDA); Patrick Grady (SIDA, Secretariat); Lucy Le Roux (Quakers in Scotland); Will Joy; Fatsuma Bubaram; Rosie Cowper (SDG2 Advocacy Hub); Karin Kanewske Turner (UNITAID NGO Delegation); Jordan Williams (IOD Parc); Anna Gessesse (Volunteer, Secure Scotland); Fu Mulan; Janet Fenton (Secure Scotland);

Online:

Calum Craig (Halo Trust); Fraser Macdonald Hay (Uniform November); Chrissie Cvetković-Hirst (Corra Foundation); Jenni Argent (University of Edinburgh); Gemma Love (Mary's Meals); Samantha Ross (Link Education); Mark Chadwick (CBM UK Disability Inclusion); Claire Duncanson (University of Edinburgh); Grace Buckley (Justice & Peace Scotland); Stella Kyalikunda; Carol Morton; Erin Mackinnon; Fiona Buchanan; Lauren Schulze.

Apologies

None noted

Agenda item 1 – Annual General Meeting

Sarah Boyack MSP welcomed all those attending in person and online.

The chair was then passed to Frances Guy, Chief Executive of Scotland's International Development Alliance, for the Annual General Meeting procedure.

Frances noted that the Group must submit an Annual Return providing an account of the Group's Activities over the past year. The return will show that the Group held meetings on 19th November 2024, which was the last AGM, and then on the 4th February and 29th April, as well as a joint meeting with the Malawi CPG on 11th March. The meeting scheduled for 16th September did not take place due to late Parliamentary Business. The Group published a report on Scottish Government International Development Funding in June of this year.

The Group must have at least five MSP Members, three of whom must be from different parties represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. Sarah Boyack (Labour), Karen Adam (SNP), Liam Kerry (Conservatives), Maurice Golden (Conservatives), Maggie Chapman (Greens) and John Mason (Independent) have all indicated their willingness to continue as Members of the Group, so the requirements are met.

Election of Convener: Sarah Boyack MSP was nominated by Liam Kerr MSP and seconded by Becky Kenton-Lake (SCCS), and approved by the meeting.

Election of Deputy Convener: Karen Adam MSP was nominated by Sarah Boyack MSP and seconded by Liam Kerr MSP, and approved by the meeting.

Agenda item 2 – Housekeeping, Minutes and Introductions

Sarah Boyack MSP thanked the Group for her re-election as Convener and looked forward to its operation in the remaining months of the current parliamentary session.

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 29th April to discuss global humanitarian and emergency situations were formally proposed by Sarah Boyack and seconded by Frances Guy and approved by the meeting.

Agenda item 3 – Panel and Discussion

Sarah introduced the theme of the meeting: challenges and Opportunities for Scotland and the World at COP30. The meeting was taking place as world leaders and civil society gather in Belem, Brazil for the 30th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP30) . This is a significant moment for

the global community in determining our collective efforts to tackle the causes and effects of the climate emergency.

Simon Anderson, Associate at the International Institute for the Environment and Development, gave the first presentation, providing an overview and context for the COP30 talks, and looking at the main negotiations areas. The conference takes place ten years since COP was held in Paris, when a 4C global temperature rise was threatening, the prediction is now for between 2 and 3 degrees, which is still higher than the 1.5C target. Between COP29 and COP30 the COP Presidencies of Azerbaijan and Brazil have been working on a roadmap for reaching the USD 1.3 trillion per year in climate financing that reflects developing-countries' needs. Key areas for negotiations include: stronger national climate plans and clearer investment pathways; mobilizing trillions for climate action in developing countries; incentivizing sustainable and climate-aligned investment; finalizing the rules for a UN-backed global carbon market; coordinating fair and inclusive transitions.

The meeting then heard three contributions from speakers joining remotely from the COP in Brazil.

Julius Ng'oma, who is the National Coordinator of the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) in Malawi, and also serves as the Executive Officer for the Chair of the Least Developed Countries Group of climate negotiators at the COP. Julius spoke about some of the logistical challenges associated with this year's conference, including the significant costs for civil society participation. There is a need for a significant increase in grant-based adaptation finance, and a tripling of the funding agreed in the Glasgow Pact, to around \$300bn. As developing countries increase work on their National Adaptation Plans, these will also need to be resourced. Countries in the global north also need to show leadership, including in discussions on mechanisms for a Just Transition.

Ben Wilson, Director of Public Engagement at the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund spoke about SCIAF's role in amplifying and supporting voices from the global south at the COP. There was need to tackle a challenging rising tide of climate scepticism around the world, at the same time as climate shocks are increasing. The COP is also taking place in the context of a decline of multilateralism, while the ICJ has ruled that all states have legal obligations under international law to protect the climate. Ben highlighted the importance of Scottish Government leadership on Loss & Damage, funding and that \$250m was now available for proposals, which is welcome but nowhere near enough. Civil society at the COP are also hoping for progress on proposals to establish a Belem Action Mechanism (BAM) for Just Transition at COP30, to require countries to take concrete steps toward a just transition, which ensures social protection and decent jobs as part of the move away from fossil fuels and decarbonising economies.

Louise Davies, Chief Executive at Scottish Fair Trade also offered some reflections on the challenging logistics of the COP and noted the high visibility of Indigenous groups. Two new digital initiatives have been launched: the Green Digital Action Hub and the AI Climate Institute. Scottish Fair Trade is particularly interested in responsible business, supply chains, women's rights, food and farming. The Scottish Government has an opportunity to show support for a global approach to just transition via the BAM.

We can learn from other countries, such as Brazil, on policy coherence, for example the new Climate Change Plan does not mention Fair Trade or procurement. The Circular Economy Strategy, which is open for consultation, includes an International Outcome which presents an opportunity for a joined up approach and more consideration of our global impact.

The final panel speaker, in person, was Becky Kenton-Lake, Coalition Manager at Stop Climate Chaos Scotland. Becky highlighted Scotland's role as a 'sub-national actor' at the COP and its participation in a number of sub-national coalitions and initiatives. Becky highlighted two aspects of climate justice: paying our fair share to support those impacted by climate change, and the need to stop causing additional harm. There is concern about some slipping in the commitments made by the Scottish Government around climate action. The new Climate Change Plan, required by the Climate Change Act does not contain much that is new or suggestive of greater ambition. There is particular concern about the reliance on Carbon Capture and Storage, which is not a proven technology. The CCP mentions the need for support for support for developing countries, but there is little reference to the sustainable development goals and a general lack of detail. SCCS has more analysis available on its website. The CPG could consider responding to the consultation which is open until the end of January. CPG members are also welcome to take part in the Climate March in Glasgow on 15th November.

The floor was then opened to questions.

Becky asked about civil society engagement with the Scottish Government at the COP. Ben has met with the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, who also spoke at a side event on debt, and is hosting an event on climate justice communities.

Sarah Boyack asked about the need to mobilise significant funds and asked if there was concern that this might add to the debt burden of developing countries. Julius spoke of the need for finance to come from public sources (assessed need of ~\$1.3tn)

Frances Guy noted today was Gender Action Day at the COP, with some members present wearing purple to mark the occasion. Simon responded that there are key opportunities for gender equality, but have to be intentionally designed into climate responses. Louise noted that the Gender Action Day activities had been visible at the COP centre.

Sam Ross (Link Education) asked about the importance of education and supporting people with disabilities, and spoke about projects funded by the Scottish Government to make education provision more climate resilient, and schools as safe spaces for pupils, especially girls. Julius said this was an area where more effort was needed, and that health and education responses needed to have their own stream within the COP negotiations.

Mark Chadwick, CBM UK (Disability inclusion) asked about efforts to have disability inclusion to be given greater prominence within COP processes. Julius agreed this had low visibility at present.

Rosie Cowper asked about the Sharm-el-Sheikh food security agenda. Julius said negotiations in this area were still ongoing.

Concluding the discussion, Sarah Boyack noted a few action points:

- The Climate March in Glasgow on Saturday 15th November
- The possibility of asking some questions in Parliament to better understand Scottish Government engagement at the COP and how it is taking forward the commitments it has made at the conference
- The possibility of some feedback or a debrief from Julius, Ben and Louise once COP is over to reflect on their experiences and the outcomes of the conference.

Agenda item 4 – CPG review of Scottish Government International Development Programme

The findings of the CPG's review into spending on international development by the Scottish Government was published in June and has been shared with the Scottish Government and the stakeholders who contributed to evidence sessions and research. It has been posted on the CPG's page on the Scottish Parliament website and on SIDA (CPG secretariat)'s website at:

<https://intdevalliance.scot/resource/cross-party-group-on-international-development-publication-on-scotlands-international-development-funding-documents/>

The Scottish Government has stated its intention to work towards the IATI standard of reporting, as recommended by the CPG and is looking at how to respond to other recommendations. Sarah has secured a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for External Affairs to discuss these issues in more detail, following a question to the First Minister during his statement about his recent visit to Zambia and Malawi.

Agenda item 5 – Next meeting(s)

It is hoped to hold at least one more meeting of the group before the dissolution of the Parliament. Possible topics are to reschedule the meeting on Health issues which had been due to take place in September, or Global Citizenship Education.

The meeting closed at 7:40pm